



Aiea Neighborhood Board No.20 NEWSLETTER



c/o Aiea Library — 99-143 Moanalua Road - Aiea, Hawaii 96701

June 2006

Ron Mobley, Editor

2005-2007

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From the Chair

By Bill Clark



William Clark
Aiea

In the 2001 Aiea Neighborhood Board Newsletter I spoke about respecting our elders and encouraging them to tell us about the "old days" so we could

record and remember their stories and pass those stories on to our children and grandchildren.

As a result of that writing, I heard from two people. One person, whose name was lost when my computer's hard drive failed and a Ms. E. Yoshimura who was kind enough to send me the Hawaii Herald of Friday, January 5, 1996 which, in Section B, had a 16-page section on Aiea written by Mr. Ron Oba.

With Mr. Oba's permission I have been able to re-type and re-print that article in the Aiea Neighborhood Board's Newsletter.

This is the first of seven sections that I hope to recreate during the coming months. The plan is to place one section, along with photos, within the mail out of the Aiea Neighborhood Board minutes.

If you would like to be put on the mailing list for the Aiea Neighborhood Board minutes please call (808) 527-5749 for information on receiving the minutes via email go to <http://www.co.honolulu.hi.us/nco/index.htm> . Or you could just go to the City and County of Honolulu's web site, Neighborhood Board, Aiea Board <http://www.honolulu.gov> and read the article on the web.

A Journey to Aiea Town

Longtime Residents Remember their Plantation Community

Editor's Note: Author Ron Oba interviewed over a dozen Aiea old-timers for this story. This article and accompanying maps represent their recollection of how the Aiea community was before World War II. Oba is a 442nd veteran and author of two books, "The Men of Company F: 442nd Regimental Combat Team" and "The Ole Man: Father Kenneth A. Bray."

The Aiea Neighborhood

*Change must follow change
Cane fires burning in the hills
O'Aiea!*

It was a quiet, restful town of about 300 families. Before the construction of the H-1 Freeway, Pearlridge Shopping Center and Aloha Stadium, the Aiea community stretched unhindered from Watertown to Waiau, from the shores of Pearl Harbor to the Koolau Mountains.

Longtime Aiea residents have always considered themselves the luckiest people to be living in the 'suburbs' of Honolulu, close to the city, but sufficiently removed to be able to know everyone and everything in their community.

You see, the Oahu Railway used to pass through Aiea along the shores of Pearl Harbor. For 10 cents, you could catch a ride into Honolulu. Or if you couldn't afford the dime, you could easily walk along the tracks to the Oahu Railway depot on Iwilei Road.

From there I remember going with my friends to Hawaii Theater. For a quarter I could watch a movie and for 35 cents more, have some delicious turtle cutlet at nearby Paramount Café.

Watertown was a small plantation town along the eastern mouth of Pearl Harbor.

Kenji Tokuno recalls that the children from Puuloa and Makalapa went to the elementary school in Watertown until the U.S. Air Force decided to locate Hickam Air Force Base there.

The military also decided to build naval housing outside of Pearl Harbor. That's when the people from Puuloa, Makalapa and Watertown relocated to Aiea town.

I remember in 1938 Henry Chagami of Forty Niners restaurant and I rode our bicycles one summer to work for E.E. Black to dig the foundations for that naval housing project. They were paying 50 cents an hour, fabulous wages for that time. We dug ditches for 8 hours a day. It was backbreaking work and harder than cutting grass or irrigating the fields on the plantations.

The cane fields of Honolulu (Aiea) Plantation extended all the way into Keehi Lagoon and the present Honolulu International Airport. Slowly, the military started to take over most of the sugar cane fields from Keehi Lagoon to Halawa. Honolulu Plantation was slowly being eaten away by development.

Traveling along the dirt road toward Puuloa and Makalapa, I used to help deliver groceries from the tailgates of the Nagamine and Santoki Store trucks. Besides the groceries, Dacosin Store usually hauled tubfuls of catfish, gori (another fish), and dojo (fresh water eels) for his Filipino customers.

Along the way we would pass through the Aliamanu Hills, along Salt Lake, and the Aiea dairy that was started by Richard Kimball in 1942. In those days, Aliamanu Hills was covered with shale, rocks and cacti. Bert Nyuha managed the dairy (located at the former site of Costco), which had 200 heads of milking cows. Yukio Toguchi, former principal of the Aiea Community School for Adults, was only 14-years old at the time. He remembers going

to Waipahu and Ewa plantations to chop off the pula pulas (young shoots) from the top of the sugar cane for cow feed.

Masako Nyuha, who now lives in Waianae, recalls that her late husband delivered 80 ten-gallon cans of milk every day to Dairymens in Honolulu. They worked the farm until 1968 when the Foster Village housing project encroached upon their land. Masako remembers that their home was just above Radford High School.

The Kamada, Harada, Imamura, Shimabukuro and Kaneko families among others, resided in Halawa Village. The community was home to a large artesian pumping station that provided water to Jyuni ban (reservoir no. 12) Nomi ike (drinking water lake) on Halawa Heights, and the reservoir at Pearl Ridge where hachi ban (No. 8 used to be. There were several other reservoirs up the hills which provided water to irrigate the sugar cane fields. At times, the reservoir water was diverted through flumes which washed the cut sugar can down to the Honolulu Plantation mill.

Sugar cane was cultivated deep into Halawa Valley, but the plateau of Red Hill was planted with pineapples. In those days, Moanalua Road was a winding and steep road, much like Old Pali road. In a Model-T we traveled from Honolulu through the winding Damon estate (who owned the entire area of Moanalua) and up and down Red Hill. Sometimes the Model-T would come across wild pigs and deer on the macadamized road. Hitting a deer didn't guarantee a meal of venison however, as more often than not, the deer would get up, give the driver the stink eye, and walk away into the bushes.

Haruno Fuyumuro, one of the few ladies who regularly drove to town, told a tale that on a dark rainy night, she could see a white figure sitting in the back seat of her car. On more than one occasion when she traversed to the bottom of the hill, the specter would

get off. Mr. Takeuchi, who drove to town to pick up produce, validates this ghostly occurrence. During World War II a sailor tried to hitch hike his way into Honolulu but was struck down and killed by a car in an accident. They say he's still trying to hitch a ride.

Halawa Heights had only one significant site to recall. The entire hill was sugar cane except for the Nomi ike reservoir. It was about half the size of a football field and fresh water flowed into it from the Halawa pump. It became a favorite place to go swimming and catch goldfish for your aquarium.

Beyond Aiea villages, the Honolulu Plantation in Aiea extended through Kalauao, the present Pearl Ridge, Waimalu Valley, Waiau Valley, Waiau Hawaiian Electric Plat, Pacific Palisades, Waimano Home Road, Pearl City Heights and towards Waipio above Sam's Club.

Ring Those Bells

By Marty Aldinger

Editor's Note: As indicated in the article below, the A'iea United Methodist Church Bell Choir rang in the start of our last four community Christmas programs. They truly are a community treasure.

Thirty-seven glistening bells ring every Christmas at the Aiea Community Christmas Concert. The Aiea United Methodist Church has had the privilege to be participants at the Christmas concert for the last four years. Our handbell choir loves to be out in the community sharing the talents of each of our members, we have also done concerts at the Bobby Benson Center for adolescents, weddings and in the church every third Sunday of the month. The handbells are made of bronze, a combination of 80% copper and 20% tin. The bells are wiped down with special cloths to help keep them free of fingerprints. A special cream is

applied once a year to polish them and make the look beautiful. There are two major factories in the United States that manufacture these bells. There is a factory in Europe that makes a different brand. Some have of the members have rung handbells for less than a year and some have rung them for many, many years. Each person in the choir has three to four bells, however they may only use two for each song, there are more advanced ringers that can use up to 6 to 8 bells. With each person playing their own part the tones comes together and makes beautiful music. We would like to thank you for inviting us to your events and hope that you enjoy the music, we share with you. If you have any questions we would be happy to answer them for you. If you are interested in learning more you may contact Karen Laflin, director or Marty Aldinger, Aiea Neighborhood Board and handbell ringer through Aiea United Methodist Church, 488-5354.

Are You Involved?

Did you know that the A'iea Neighborhood Board meets almost every month of the year? Well, they do. At the meetings we hear from the various governmental agencies and their representatives on issues that affect us. Additionally, all members from the community are encouraged to bring things that are on their minds to those who attend. Come and be heard. Better yet, come and be involved. The meeting schedule, agenda, and previous meeting minutes can be found at <http://www.honolulu.gov/nco/index.htm> or <http://www.honolulu.gov/nco/nb20/index.htm>



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